

A Shared Mission

| BY JANET SNYDER MATTHEWS |

ON A WINDY, WINTRY January 15th, First Lady Laura Bush stepped up to the cameras in the East Room of the White House. Standing before President Washington's portrait, she announced \$10 million in grants under Preserve America, an ambitious heritage tourism initiative to help states, tribes, and communities preserve their cultural and natural legacies. **MRS. BUSH GAVE** Preserve America certificates to eight local governments, from Florida's Key West to Colorado's Steamboat Springs. She reflected on her experience as First Lady of the Lone Star State, traveling with Houston's John L. Nau III, chair of the Texas Historical Commission, to designate historic Main Street communities. Today, Mr. Nau, chair of the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, spearheads Preserve America. Among its offerings will be public service announcements by the First Lady, aired on the History Channel, and an annual award for the "National Preserve America History Teacher of the Year." **OUR HERITAGE TOURISM TRAIN** rides on wheels Congress constructed in the National Historic Preservation Act. The engine is powered by a national need to know who we are through economically sustainable, culturally diverse private and public places—neighborhoods and downtowns, pubs and forts, battlefields and cemeteries, warehouses and courthouses, humble and grand homes, schoolhouses and houses of worship. **HERITAGE TOURISM RELIES ON** National Historic Landmarks, National Heritage Areas, the WPA-created Historic American Buildings Survey, and many other initiatives and programs. It depends on every national park—from Mesa Verde to Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site—as well as the one million-plus properties on the National Register of Historic Places. **INTERIOR SECRETARY GALE NORTON**—in a video broadcast sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce—called the National Register a perfect database for heritage tourists, built from the ground up in every state since the 1966 passage of the National Historic Preservation Act. In the "Southern Passages" segment of the broadcast (called "Three Rural Economic Development Strategies") Chairman Nau portrayed a vision of vibrant heritage tourism, citing both his home state of Texas and the recently published *Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation in Florida*, which used 2000 census data to document \$4.2 billion in annual revenue. **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DIRECTOR FRAN MAINELLA** points to the essence of heritage tourism success. "Perhaps our greatest accomplishment is the recognition that we do not work alone . . . working relationships with colleagues and friends in the public and private sectors, in federal, tribal, state, and local governments, in universities and colleges across

this great nation, are a mighty force to preserve this nation's history for generations yet to come." **ONE PROMINENT PARTNER** is the National Trust for Historic Preservation, whose far-sighted initiatives under President Dick Moe include proposed amendments to make the NPS-administered historic rehabilitation tax credit work better to revitalize communities. The Historic Preservation Development Council—a joint effort of the National Housing and Rehabilitation Association and the Trust—is working with a broad coalition to improve the customer responsiveness and policy consistency of the tax credit program. **LAST OCTOBER**, Secretary Norton and Mr. Moe signed an agreement to find new uses for historic structures in western national parks. Through private partnerships, the Trust plans to raise \$1 million to restore White Grass Ranch in Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park as a center for preservation training and technology. **THE PRESIDENT SET ASIDE** \$350,000 for White Grass in his proposed budget, which includes \$192.6 million for preservation, heritage tourism and education, and technology training. One project establishes operations at Flight 93 National Memorial, collecting, preserving, archiving, and cataloguing thousands of artifacts. Another stabilizes, restores, and preserves historic structures at California's Cabrillo National Monument. Yet another initiates preventive maintenance and restoration at South Dakota's Minuteman Missile National Historic Site. Twenty construction projects, totaling \$50 million, range from \$739,000 to protect collections at Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Site to \$9.8 million to complete restoration of Old House at Old Faithful Inn. **EACH OF US BRINGS** unique skill and persona to reach shared national goals. As a child, Chairman Nau set up Pickett's Charge on a card table with model soldiers and horses; as teenagers working summer jobs, Director Mainella and David Andrews, editor of *Common Ground*, saw the face-to-face impact of our heritage on visitors to local parks. Trust President Dick Moe researched and published his book, *The Last Full Measure: The Life and Death of the First Minnesota Volunteers*, after his election to the Civil War Battlefields Trust. One and all, for diverse reasons based on a multitude of experiences, we work today for tomorrow's generations. I look forward to serving the mission we share.

Janet Snyder Matthews, Ph.D., was sworn in on January 5 as National Park Service Associate Director for Cultural Resources. A native Ohioan and a Florida author and historian, she came from the private sector in 1999 to her appointment as State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State. Matthews is an Advisor Emeritus of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and a former board member of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. She was appointed by Secretary Norton to the National Park System Advisory Board, and is immediate past Chair of the National Landmarks Committee.